

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of July 14, 2005 at Meadowedge, West Sayville

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Alexander McKay Chairman, Town of Huntington
Matthew Kruger Vice Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Charles Bender Member of the Board
Ray Corwin Member At Large
John Fritz Trustee, Town of Babylon
Todd Stebbins Member of the Board
Joseph Miller Trustee, Town of Islip

ABSENT: Vacancy Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Thomas J. McCaffery Trustee, Town of Southold
Aurelio Colina Trustee, Town of Southampton
Gary Olsen Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Richard F. White, Jr. Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Christopher C. Drake Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

PARKS DEPARTMENT: Ronald F. Foley Commissioner
Tracey Belone Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister Contracts Manager
Bill Sickles Sr. Superintendent of Parks
Nick Gibbons Sr. Environmental Analyst
Tom Hroncich Intergovernmental Rel. Coordinator
Mary Simonsen Secretary to the Commissioner

GUESTS: Thomas Isles Director of Planning
Michael Mule Planning Department
Jennifer Kohn Assistant County Attorney
Janet Longo Assistant to Director of Real Estate
Lisa Keys Aide to Legislator Caracciolo
Tom Melito Town of Babylon

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Gilbert Cardillo

PUBLIC SPEAKING PORTION:

Chairman McKay welcomed Tom Melito from the Town of Babylon who was there to present an update on Oak Beach Park. Mr. Melito said the last time he met with the Trustees was approximately one year ago and much has been happening as far as securing funds for the park and plans for getting Phase I started and completed.

Mr. Melito said the Town of Babylon has been awarded another \$1.3 million in the last few months via two federal programs and one state program, and another \$500,000 from the Federal Department of Transportation to move the road.

He went on to say that the last time they had spoken, they were just putting together plans for

Phase I, which were intended for shoreline improvements, with the possibility of altering it slightly to make public areas bigger and the private areas smaller. They had put out an RFP for a restaurant and bed and breakfast but the issue became that the site was very small, less than nine acres, and they had received a lot of interest for buildings much larger than they had wanted. He said they have to make sure it is an active park supported by private sector businesses.

Since starting Phase I, they have gone to bid twice. Unfortunately, on the first bid, the bids came in too high and it was unsuccessful. They then reduced the scope of the project, made it clearer and put it out a second time. They received one bid (a second bid was not accepted because it did not meet the deadline) but it was \$700,000 over the budget. They went back to the drawing board a third time and are preparing the documents which should be ready to go out next Wednesday. Mr. Melito said he feels this one should be successful as it was simplified more and they have another \$500,000 available from the Federal Government.

He said the first Phase was essentially in regards to the shorefront with the exception of the boardwalk, which under the new bid is now a gravel walkway because the bids for the boardwalk were much too high. All of the bulk heading is in the new bid, as well as the refurbishing of the existing pier and regrading of the beach area and parking lot.

Phase I-A is anticipated to begin after Labor Day. They are in the process of getting a contract signed with New York State for \$500,000 to move the road which would expand the park by about 20%. He said they hope to start construction on that by the end of the fall so that by spring they will have Phase I fully done and can begin on Phase II.

Mr. Melito said there will be approximately 500 feet of shoreline walkways added. Eliminated from the first Phase for the moment was relocating the electric lines at a cost of \$200,000, which they are holding on to for Phase I-A.

Oak Beach is still very active, especially on weekends with kayaking, sail boating, etc. But by next spring it will be much more user friendly, the fixing of the parking lot will do so. But right now, the boat ramp is still closed and people carry their kayaks and such down to the beach.

The Town of Babylon and the Suffolk County Water Authority are working to get a water district into Oak Beach for the park and the communities to the west and the east. They are generating public knowledge and support as this will not only help in the need for residential water, but also create a more a reasonable measure of fire safety. A test well is to be drilled in the next one to two months.

He said they are continuing a dialog with developers who want to put in facilities to support the park and is holding off doing further RFPs (Requests for Proposals) until the first Phase of the development is done so developers can see what is there and what it will look like.

Trustee Fritz asked if there were plans for a fishing pier in Phase I. Mr. Melito said that has been put in Phase I-A of development and that it was originally in the first bid but it was too expensive but that it is still in the plan. Trustee Fritz then asked if they would refurbish an existing pier that could be fished off of and Mr. Melito said that yes, they are accumulating the funds to do so. He added that he thought the pier may be too high to fish off of, but that it would be allowed.

Trustee Fritz asked about road realignment, if it was going to lead to the checkpoint on the western community. Mr. Melito said it has been an issue with the community and that no, that is not part of the realignment plan.

He said the money flow is starting to pick up speed and has applications through Congressman King for another \$3.1 million. Trustee Corwin asked if they were concerned that waiting for Phase I to be completed to begin Phase II would leave a big gap in time in their progress. Mr. Melito said they can't really work on Phase II until they have a funding source and they are working on it as we speak.

Mr. Hroncich asked how the walkways being changed to gravel would impact handicapped access. Mr. Melito stated that the main walkways on either side of the park would be changed to gravel but, there will be handicapped accessible ramps as well that will lead straight to the pier. He said final plans are not set, but it will be handicapped accessible.

Trustee Corwin asked if the federal funds come with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) restrictions and requirements. Mr. Melito replied that all federal funds do, and they carry specific uses, that's why it takes longer to receive them.

Trustee Fritz asked if they had taken into account anticipated heavy weekend traffic and the need for bathroom facilities. Mr. Melito replied that right now there are four port-a-potties as well as a mobile snack vendor. With no further questions from the Trustees, Mr. Melito concluded.

Chairman McKay then invited Lisa Keys from Legislator Caracciolo's office to make her presentation. She said Legislator Caracciolo was introducing a resolution that would link county park discounted fees for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers and Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) with park fees for senior citizens.

Ms. Keys said if the resolution were adopted that the total number of members who would use this discount is approximately 250, which would break down to a loss of \$916 per year to the County if the resolution passed. Legislator Caracciolo is requesting support from the Trustees and as of the time of the meeting, the legislation was still in the Parks Committee.

Trustee Miller asked what the criteria are? Those who perform extraordinary important public services, volunteer firefighters and active and non-active military and so forth? Bill Sickles said that there are others who receive a discounted or free green key card, such as volunteer fire and ambulance personnel, veterans with a service related disability, and the families of deployed active duty military personnel. Trustee Miller said the list of those who qualify appears to be very narrow.

Vice Chairman Kruger asked, in regards to CERT and the others who perform extraordinary service to Suffolk County residents listed in this resolution, does this include any others such as volunteer amateur radio emergency services communicators? Ms. Keys replied that they would if they are a member of CERT, VIPS or MRC. She said this request came about when a new member of the newly formed CERT inquired about a reduced fee. She said the problem is in recruiting volunteer members and then keeping them, the members of these organizations do not receive any type of compensation. This is a way to thank them at a minimal cost. Vice Chairman Kruger noted the legislation mentions CERT and the others, but there are organizations that respond to the public on a volunteer basis that are not mentioned in this legislation. Ms. Keys replied that as she had stated, this request originated from a CERT member, but it was decided that we include the other members listed in the legislation as a way to open the door for other volunteers.

Trustee Fritz asked, how often are the CERT volunteers actually deployed? The fire and ambulance EMT's are out all the time, exactly what do these members do? He said that we haven't had much or anything at all in the way of terrorism in Suffolk County that he was aware

of. Ms. Keys replied that CERT was established by the County Executive in 2004 in response to September 11th. She added that she wasn't fully aware of the details of their recruitment and responsibilities but offered that she could get that information to the Trustees if they wished.

Chairman McKay said that, in the interest of time that we take this up again under New Business, as the Commissioner needed to make his report in order to leave this meeting early to attend another meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

The Commissioner referred to a handout he distributed of the 2006 proposed Parks Department operating budget and stated that it is required by the charter to let the Trustees review it.

He said the rules state we are required to turn in a zero percent increase budget in comparison with 2005, with the exception of the personnel categories because there are bargaining unit benefits for them, so they can't be kept at zero. We requested an increase in allocation for seasonal park staff.

The 2006 budget is up for County Executive Review, the legislature will have the Department in for hearings and this will take place over the next several months. Trustee Bender said it would be presented to the Legislature in September and the hearings will take place in October.

Chairman McKay asked if the Board is to recommend or approve the budget. The Commissioner read from the charter, which states: "The Commissioner shall submit to the Board his estimates of receipts and proposed expenditures in connection with the preparation of the annual county budget, prior to submission of such estimates to the budget officer"... "The Commissioner shall take into consideration but shall not be bound by the recommendations of the Board as to such estimates. The Board may submit to the budget officer any recommendations which the Commissioner declines to accept."

Trustee Corwin requested that they could hold off discussions or decisions of the budget until the next meeting in order to give the Trustees time to look at it more closely. The Commissioner and Chairman both agreed.

The Commissioner then turned to the handout on Golf Round Analysis for January-June, from 1997 to present, noting that it was unaudited and unedited. He said that it looked like it would be a good year and that for the month of June; Timber Point had broken all previous years' records, saying that the renovations done there are having a positive effect and were a good investment. Chairman McKay noticed that there has been a steady decline in the full-year analyses. The Commissioner said that Timber Point had been under construction in 2002-2003 and that 2003 was a very wet season which was not conducive to high numbers of golfers. He added that there has been a general flattening out of interest in golf, and that the demand might be the same but the number of golf courses available to be played has increased. Chairman McKay commented that these are just numbers of rounds, not revenue. The Commissioner replied that he was correct and that golf revenue runs about \$4 million.

ADOPTION OF THE JUNE 16, 2005 MINUTES:

- Page 3, first paragraph: change the abbreviation "FSVB" to "FSBV".
- Page 3, second paragraph: In the third sentence, change "statue" to "statute".
- Page 5: Strike the first full paragraph as may be a speculative statement.
- Page 7, fourth paragraph: add "in Montauk" after GATR site.

- Page 8, third full paragraph, second to last sentence: Change it to read "...the Parks Department asked that the building be centrally located."
- Page 8, the same paragraph, strike the last sentence.
- Page 14, first full paragraph: change "sand-pit" to "sand-mine".
- Page 15, second full paragraph: change the first sentence to read "...that all vehicles would be prohibited..."
- Page 15, second full paragraph: change the third sentence after the comma to read "but the Trustees should be..."

Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to adopt the minutes. Trustee Miller motioned, Trustee Corwin seconded. The motion to adopt the minutes as amended was accepted.

Tom Isles – Planning Department

Joining Mr. Isles today was Janet Longo, Assistant to the Director of Real Estate and introduced new staff member Michael Mulé who is an Environmental Planner.

Mr. Isles had four acquisitions to present today.

1. **Sagaponac Woods** property in Southampton, a parcel of 42.2 acres for which a resolution is pending before the legislature. It is located in the town of Southampton, directly on the two town lines of Southampton and East Hampton and is in the South Fork Groundwater Protection area. The property is known as Lingo 1 as it is owned by Lingo 1 Associates. Just east of this location is the East Hampton Airport, so there are extensive holdings in this area by both the Town and the County primarily for the purpose of groundwater protection. It falls under the Multifaceted Open Space Program. This parcel is being pursued in the interest of continuing conservation efforts in this area. Real Estate has negotiated the acquisition and has a contract at this point.

Trustee Miller asked at what point do we know who the people are that we purchase acquisitions from; how do we find out the determining principal LLC's of corporations involved in acquisitions? Ms. Longo replied that is all written out in the disclosure statement. Trustee Corwin asked at what point is a disclosure statement filed. Ms. Longo replied that that it goes out with the contract after the deal is made.

Trustee Corwin said that if there is one real or perceived abuse that we can prevent in the future, it would be worth the extra effort. Trustee Miller said that we should know who we are buying the property from and Mr. Isles replied that he had no quarrel with that, it's a matter of copying that part of the disclosure statement, we can do that.

Chairman McKay stated that in annual financial disclosure statements, any county appointee must indicate any business done with any agency of the Suffolk County Government. He said he felt this is mainly a question of suitability as an addition to parkland that is the Board's main concern. However, if there is a question regarding the propriety of the transaction, that question should be raised so that others can be aware of it.

At this time Chairman McKay noted that there was not a quorum of Trustees to allow for voting and would have to hold off doing so with the hope that another Trustee would arrive late. In the meantime he asked Mr. Isles to continue with his presentation.

2. **Amsterdam Beach**, located in the Montauk bluff area, Town of East Hampton. It is 122.8 acres extending from Montauk Highway to the Atlantic Ocean, and is in the vicinity of other protected parcels: The Andy Warhol Nature Conservancy and the Dick Cavett House, which is also a future proposed acquisition. The Montauk Bluff area is made up of 2,800 acres, of which 2,400 is protected land either through the Nature Conservancy or public ownership. Of the 122.8 acres, 54 of them are a wetlands bluff with frontage on the Atlantic Ocean. It would be acquired under the Multifaceted Open Space Program. The parcel would be a three-way partnership between New York State, the Town of Southampton and Suffolk County.

Trustee Miller asked if that is or would be a state park, Ms. Longo replied that it would be jointly owned and the State would manage it and keep it clean and the County would be a 1/3 partner. Trustee Miller asked what the signage for the park would say and Ms. Longo replied that it was still subject to legal approval.

3. The third acquisition Mr. Isles presented was a parcel of ¼ acre located in Patchogue in the town of Brookhaven in the **Mud Creek Watershed**. While it is small, it is part of an extensive series of acquisitions that the county has been doing over the last three years. It started with the fact that the County took over the former Gallow Duck Farm and put into the parks system. Subsequently the County has engaged in an effort to extend acquisitions in this area. This parcel has two branches of watershed that drain into the Great South Bay. Mr. Isles noted that the west branch of Mud Creek is the only location on Long Island that has a genetically pure trout population. This acquisition was part of the master list from last year and Real Estate has been contacting individual owners and getting appraisals, etc. This would be a closed acquisition under the Multifaceted Open Space Program.

Chairman McKay asked if this was a single tax map or a group of smaller ones. Mr. Isles replied that he believed it was a single tax map parcel.

4. **Gould's Pond**, is a 5.5 acre parcel located in the Village of Lake Grove, Town of Brookhaven. It was the subject of a 1999 resolution to consider the acquisition under the old drinking water protection program, 12-5-A. Real Estate has been successful in contacting and negotiating with the owner. He said it is a relatively dense area but is one of a few vacant, undeveloped lots and is within zone one in terms of the hydro-geologic management zones.

Trustee Fritz asked who owns the property to the south. Mr. Isles said they've been looking into that to see if they could possibly add it to the master list, but at this time he was not sure who owns it. Chairman McKay asked if the Board of Trustees had approved 12-5-A, Mr. Isles replied that yes, they had.

The above four acquisitions were not voted on as there was not a quorum of Trustees at this time.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman McKay acknowledged a letter the Commissioner had received, which all of the Trustees were sent a copy. The letter was from R. Timothy Maran, a former Parks Trustee from the Town of Southampton. Mr. Maran acknowledged the exceptional condition and staffing of Suffolk County Parks. Mr. Maran had just returned from a 100-day, 24-state camping trip and said that Suffolk County Parks were equal to or better than any of the State and Federal facilities he used and wished to share this with the Parks staff and the Board of Trustees. Chairman McKay said it was quite a compliment to the staff and administration of the Parks Department.

Chairman McKay wished Tom Hroncich a happy belated birthday. He also wanted to let the Board know that his grandson who had a brain tumor had passed his MRI the previous day and is hopefully cured.

At this time Chairman McKay acknowledged Deputy Commissioner Bellone and Colleen Hofmeister who had a few more items to discuss in the Commissioner's absence.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone said the **Equestrian Advisory Committee**, which was formed after the closing of Southaven Stables, had met the previous day. They had been looking at all of the equestrian facilities in Suffolk County and are now focusing on Southaven. DPW (Department of Public Works) has hired a consultant to do an engineering study of the building. Also, the US Horse Jumping Association would be taking a tour of Southaven as they are looking for a facility to use for horse shows. They were very impressed with the facility and said it would meet their needs. The Deputy Commissioner said they had a meeting with them at the County Executive's office the following week.

As for **Sears Bellows**, Ms. Hofmeister said they had put out an RFP (Request for Proposal) for an operator and they had received two proposals. After reviewing them it was decided that at this time they were not going to recommend awarding a contract.

Regarding **Trap and Skeet**, Ms. Hofmeister said they are in the midst of a full fledged RFP and had received one proposal. The Commissioner is reviewing recommendations to decide if the contract will be awarded. She added that this contract is being treated differently due to a 2002 resolution that mandated that the recommendation for awarding the contract would have to go to the Legislature to review.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone said Legislator Cooper had formed a **Coindre Hall/West Neck Farm** Advisory Committee to discuss future development of the entire site. The Advisory Committee will be touring the areas of the proposed dog run and the boathouse.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman McKay brought up **Forsythe Meadow**, which was discussed at the previous meeting, and acknowledged Nick Gibbons of the Parks Department, who had toured the area along with Tom Isles and Legislator Vilorio-Fisher.

Mr. Gibbons said that he and Mr. Isles were of the same mind in that the fence in question is basically left as it was four years ago – incomplete in some areas and completely missing in others. The community was against the chain link, mechanized fence. Mr. Gibbons said he would advocate refurbishing the areas with a chain link fence where one already exists and something more appealing like a split rail fence where there is no fence at all. He said post-holes were dug and left, creating a walking hazard and fencing material is strewn about the site. He said in his opinion, that the erosion was not as dire as they were led to believe, but ideally a 50 foot set-back should have been required, but that opportunity is gone. Mr. Gibbons said his most important issue is that the clearing has opened the area up to invasive species. Removal of them would only be a temporary solution, which wouldn't be an issue if the set-back had been required and implemented.

Mr. Isles said it had been referred to the Suffolk County Planning Committee, requesting a recommendation for a 50 foot buffer. He said the slope was severely modified and the damage has already been done, but there is some authority to require remediation and correction. He said there is a lot of vegetation and growth in the slope and it is stable but to go and clear the

invasive species now may destabilize the slope. The Forsythe Meadow acquisition stopped with the fence problem and there was nothing done further. There's also no opportunity for public access such as trails or parking.

Chairman McKay asked if planting mature trees was a possibility. Mr. Gibbons said that was not possible. The best hope is to stem or remove the invasive species given the present conditions. The best option for improvement of the park is to create appropriate public access to the property, which it does not have now due to the current conditions.

Mr. Isles said there had been a public hearing on July 11th that Louise Harrison (who initially brought the matter to the Boards' attention) of the Coalition for the Future of Stony Brook Village had attended and that the deadline to submit an opinion in writing was July 21st.

Chairman McKay said he had a letter prepared to send to the Town of Brookhaven Planning Board on behalf of the Trustees, stating that the Trustees were concerned about the environmental impacts of the post office expansion, such as the negative effects of the clearing and grading for the parking field, bright parking lights, invasive plant species, and the incomplete and hazardous fencing.

The Chairman's letter stated that it was the Trustees' belief that a fifty-foot buffer as recommended by the Suffolk County Planning Commission should have been required along the park boundary. Since this was not mandated, the Trustees made the following recommendations to correct these impacts: the removal and replacement of non-native species along the disturbed boundary of the park, shielding the lights, restoring and completing the existing fence, extending it with appropriate fencing other than chain-link, and cleaning and repairing the hazardous conditions in the area and since the buffer was never required, the letter recommended that additional mitigation be required to provide access to the park preserve at an appropriate location.

Chairman McKay asked, if they don't have adjoining property for public access, would they incur cost of providing public access? Mr. Gibbons replied that yes, potentially they could.

Vice Chairman Kruger asked if they can use post office property to make terraced steps? Mr. Isles said that it is private property but the town could approach the post office and ask if they would provide parking for the County of Suffolk, but he said it was his impression that this was something they would not consider. He also said that the County is pursuing the acquisition of Smoke Run Farm which is right next to Forsythe Meadow and an entrance could be created there. But that the thinking is that it will more likely be a contribution of land for access on the other side.

Chairman McKay asked the Trustees if there were any other topics they wished to discuss under Old Business.

Trustee Fritz asked if there had been any responses to the 30 day public comment period for the Smith Point Fishing Pier project. Mr. Hroncich said that he had received two, including the one sent by Trustee Fritz and they are now asking for a FONSI (Finding of no Significant Impact). He also said that construction will be starting in March of 2006 and under that grant it has to be completed by March of 2007, but we anticipate being done before then.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman McKay returned to the subject of Resolution 1581, as was discussed earlier in the meeting. Trustee Corwin said that he was not opposed to such a resolution but in the interest of

fairness one would have to look at who else deserves the discount; it could get unwieldy very quickly and other groups may be inadvertently left out.

Vice Chairman Kruger stated that he has volunteered as an amateur radio operator from a young age and the goal was to participate in something to help others, and nowhere along the line were there any rewards other than being of service to the community. The discount for the families of deployed military is reasonable as this may put a financial strain on the families at home. But, he said, when you talk about anyone who volunteers, for whatever the cause, they do it for the sake of helping others, not for discounts or financial rewards. He would like the author of this legislation to reconsider the direction and focus on where it could be the most beneficial.

Trustee Bender said there has been discussion in the Legislature to look at this as a whole and put it in one uniform package and motioned to hold this for the next meeting and Trustee Stebbins agreed it should be held until the next meeting.

With the arrival of Trustee Stebbins, the Board now had a quorum in order to vote on the acquisitions presented by Mr. Isles. Trustee Stebbins said he was familiar with them and had looked at the paperwork on them already.

Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to approve the **Gould's Pond** acquisition. Trustee Corwin motioned to approve, seconded by Trustee Kruger. Motion approved.

Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to recommend the acquisition of **Mud Creek**. The motion to recommend was made by Trustee Fritz, seconded by Trustee Miller. Motion approved.

Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to recommend acquisition of the parcel in **Sagaponac Woods**. Trustee Corwin motioned to recommend, seconded by Trustee Miller. Motion approved.

Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to recommend acquisition of the **Amsterdam Beach** parcel. Trustee Stebbins motioned to recommend, seconded by Trustee Fritz. Motion approved.

Chairman McKay asked if anyone wanted to discuss any other questions before the close of the meeting. Trustee Miller asked the Deputy Commissioner if the Park Police were currently hiring and that he knew of a few NYPD officers that had been interested. The Deputy Commissioner replied that they had reached out to them to see if they were still interested and Parks is hoping to hire seven or eight new officers in/by September. She said that the Department had just sent out the paperwork for approval to hire, all that is needed now is for Budget and the County Executive to sign off on them, and that should be forthcoming. She added that the Park Police were eager to get them on board.

Trustee Fritz asked how the numbers were for outer beach permits were looking. Mr. Sickles replied that the only decline was at Smith Point because the outer beach has been closed, but all the others were on track or above. But the largest percent of the sales of outer beach passes are typically at Smith Point

Trustee Miller asked about audits and fund collecting. The Deputy Commissioner replied that the new auditors are visiting various sites and making recommendations.

As Trustee Stebbins had no changes to request for the June 16 minutes, the vote to approve them as amended was deemed legitimate by Chairman McKay.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Trustee Bender noted that the time of the next meeting would conflict with the Legislative meetings, and Chairman McKay pointed out that the next meeting was scheduled at 10:00 a.m. It was decided that the August 18 meeting is to be held at West Sayville at 10:00 am.

Chairman McKay announced the meeting adjourned.